

## Holding On

Last day of the year. Rain  
clouds broke. Clear but cold  
enuf to chill a case of beer  
on the back porch. Talk  
of the year. I made a few  
poems, a pail of beer, tended  
the green & yellow garden. Learning  
to play a two dollar bamboo flute  
when the sun shines. Carol made bread.  
Whole wheat, rye, & the sweet  
pumpkin. Gave birth to a  
Libre son. Albion.  
Robins peck at fallen apples  
in the yard. One lone yellow apple  
on the bare tree. Talk  
of spring. Holding on.

-- Charles Tidler

Ganges, B.C., Canada

## On The High Plateau

Mornings the white bear has left,  
his tracks in the mud heading for the Sierra;  
later peons trudge scarred beneath their grub hoes  
past lake Cuauhtemoc with its reeds and sleeping ducks,  
at night beat on barrels, tear out their throats,  
or squat talking in the railroad yard among the stacked  
logs  
as darkness pools around them.  
beneath meteor showers the plain stretches away to the  
mountains.  
except the Mennonites driving carriages,  
huffing in their wool coats,  
sit in their cold churches  
sobering up  
and the bride in a starched blouse,  
lips two drawn wires, presents herself  
into the putty hand  
of her lover, etched with letters.  
past midnight there is no moon or stars  
except babies dying, frost on the station windows;  
and kneeling with the light you find  
the tracks again, ridged, flecked with brads of snow,  
your breath steel. and the corpse of a woman,  
feet first, muscles frozen  
shoots over, teeth exposed, gold hair streaming...